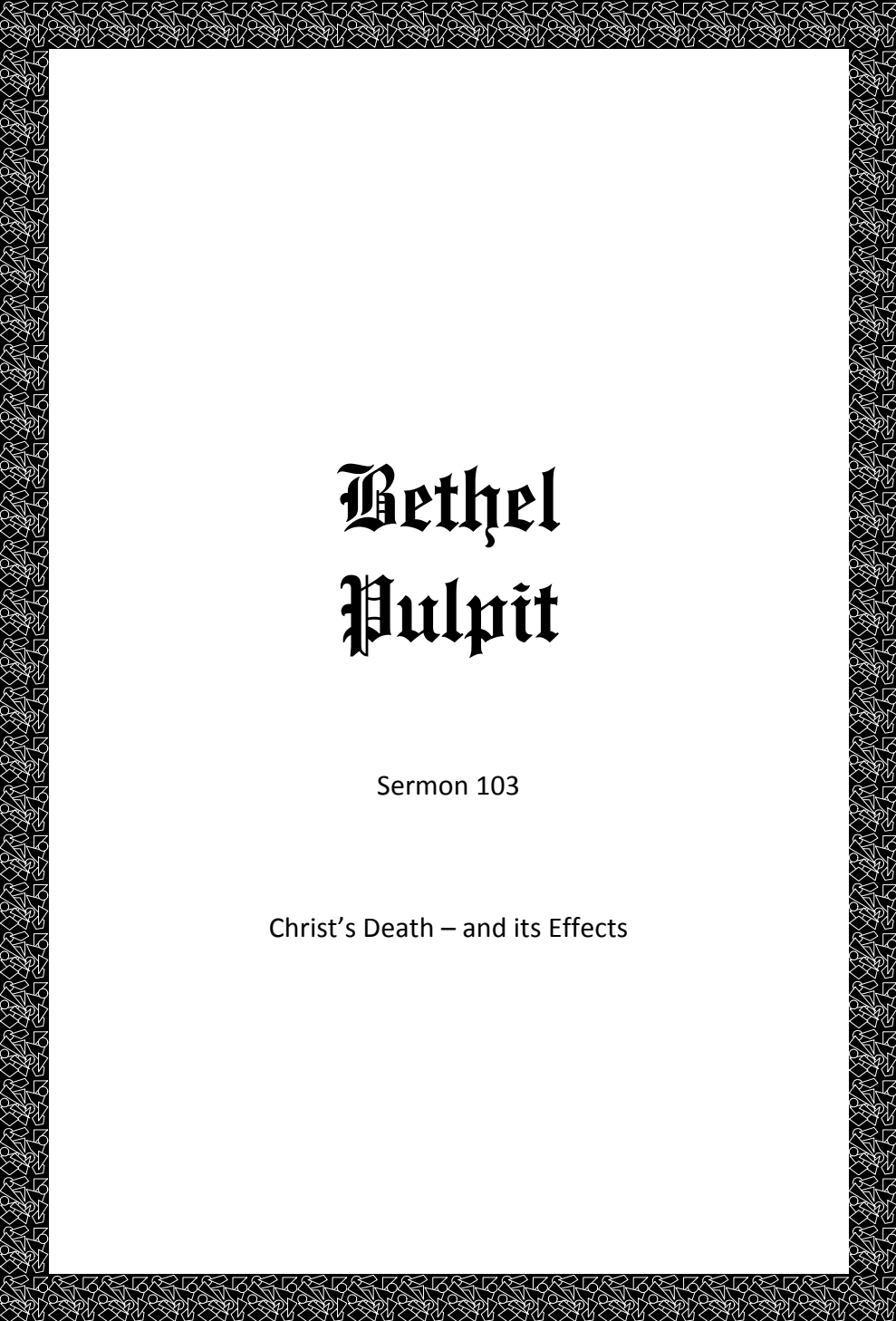




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 103

Christ's Death – and its Effects

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 11th April, 1993 (Easter Sunday)**

Text: *“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Hebrews 13. 11-14).*

What an unspeakable mercy it is as we meet together this morning to realise that “the Lord is risen indeed”! First of all, the blessed *fact* of it, the certainty, the reality of it. Then secondly, the *doctrine* of it: “declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead,” raised again for His people’s justification. Then thirdly, the *experience* of it – that same power which brought the Lord Jesus from the dead quickening a sinner into life in the new birth, that same power enlightening, enlivening, invigorating God’s people. So it is a wonderful mercy to be reminded this morning that the Lord is risen indeed.

But beloved friends never forget this, that when we think of the resurrection, when we speak of the resurrection, there is always preceding it that precious, sin-atonement death. The apostle says, “We preach Christ crucified.” Well, we do, but we do not preach a dead Christ. We preach a living Saviour, a living Christ, but we preach a Christ who did die. And the vital point in all real religion is the sin-atonement sufferings and death and resurrection and exaltation of the Son of God. In the words here before us we have His sin-atonement death, that precious death, and also we have the gracious effects of it in the lives of His people.

Now the apostle begins here by speaking of Christ as our sin offering. “The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.” He goes right back to the day of atonement. Two goats were taken. The lot was cast, one goat for the Lord, one for the people. On the head of one of the goats all the sins of all God’s Israel were laid, ceremonially laid, and then that goat was led out into the wilderness, symbolising the complete

removing of the sin of God's people in the atonement. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Now the other goat was slain. Its blood was brought by the high priest into the most holy place and there sprinkled upon the mercyseat. But the body of that goat was to be carried right through the hosts of Israel, right outside the camp, and there outside the camp, as an accursed thing, that goat had to be burnt.

Not to dwell on this too long, but there were many offerings under the law, but essentially there were sin offerings and burnt offerings. The burnt offerings were offerings of a sweet savour. They were pleasing to God, representing the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His Father's beloved Son, the offering of His holy, spotless life as a sacrifice in death with which His Father was well pleased. But the sin offering was different. As an accursed thing the body had to be taken right outside the camp and there be burnt, representing the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as He was made sin for His people, as all their sins were imputed to Him. So the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burnt without the camp. Now this is it: "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" – Christ our sin offering. The Jewish rulers, the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin, they did not count Him worthy even to die within the city. So they led Him forth, crucified Him. There outside the camp, outside the city wall, despised, rejected of men, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was crucified. O the love of the Saviour, that matchless love in His humiliation, that matchless love in His death, in His willingness to die! "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." So we see the Saviour led "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." "Was ever love like this?" The willingness of the Saviour to die! That life they could never take away, how freely He laid it down.

Then we have who He is, the innocent Saviour, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." And then we have who He is, the Son of God from all eternity. The wonderful love, matchless condescension of the incarnate Son of God! And we think of those bitter sorrows, and we think of those agonies even unto death as there the Lord Jesus dies as the sin offering. "Is it nothing to you?" "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass

by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.”

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate” – that “green hill, far away, without a city wall.” Now it was outside the city, outside that city wall, that the Lord Jesus suffered. Now may we this morning be found by faith looking to Jesus.

“What object’s this which meets my eyes
Without Jerusalem’s gate?

“Who can it be that groans beneath
A cross of massy wood;
Whose soul’s o’erwhelmed in pains of death
And body bathed in blood?

“Is this the Man? can this be He
The prophets have foretold
Should with transgressors numbered be,
And for their crimes be sold?”

Now do you believe it?

“Yes, now I know ‘tis He, ‘tis He!
’Tis Jesus, God’s dear Son,
Wrapped in humanity, to die
For crimes that I had done!”

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” Now beloved friends, there seems such an awful solemnity here: “*His own blood.*” O that blood which began to flow in the garden before any human hand smote Him, that blood which flowed in the judgment hall under the cruel scourging, and that blood which flowed from the crown of thorns and the nails and the wound of the cruel spear! I take it when the apostle emphasises “*His own blood,*” he is thinking of the contrast with the blood of bulls and goats and calves that he has been writing about all through this beautiful epistle. But now you see, “*His own blood.*” We think of that sacred scripture: “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

“His own blood.” Of course, when the New Testament speaks of the blood of Christ, essentially it means His death, for He must die, death being the wages of sin, and Christ suffering in the sinner’s place. “His own blood,” His life poured out in death. But you see, “His own blood,” this is the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. This is the place where the vilest sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need is welcome to wash and be clean. “His own blood.” See how the Word of God speaks of it: cleansing blood, and atoning blood, and sheltering blood.

Now here, sanctifying blood. “Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” Now what are we to understand by this? Well of course, in a more general sense if we take the word *sanctify* to signify making holy, then we think of the precious blood of Jesus completely taking away every spot, ever stain. “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ... that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” But we must not just limit this word *sanctify* to make it equivalent with justify or cleanse. The point here is a very important point, that the blood of Christ, wherever it is known and experienced in its cleansing, saving, justifying effect in the heart, will always have a sanctifying effect. Do not speak of the blood of Christ if you do not know anything of its sanctifying effect. Where the blood of Christ saves, it always sanctifies. It will separate you from the world. It will make you die to your past life. It will set your affections on things above. It will make you hate sin, especially in this way, that you will see sin, your sin, as that which made the Saviour agonise and bleed and die. It is at the cross of Christ that sin appears in all its blackness and vileness and awfulness, and it is at the cross of Christ where you will loathe yourself and hate your own sin. If you feel something of the sanctifying effect of the blood of Christ on your conscience, you will not want to grieve this dear Saviour who loves you so much. At times you will see your sins as so many thorns in His crown, and you will not want to grieve Him. O the sanctifying effect of the blood of Christ!

I will tell you when a child of God will walk most tenderly: not under the lashings of the holy law of God given on Sinai, but when you feel the love of Christ in your heart and know something of the softening effect of the blood of the Redeemer, then you will walk tenderly; then you will walk in His fear. Let me appeal to you, beloved friends, this morning.

Can you go back to when Christ was made precious, when you had a glimpse by faith of Calvary, when you saw Him bleeding and dying, when He became your only hope, your only trust? Didn't you then walk very carefully and reverently and tenderly in the fear of God? "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." You see, we are told three vital things about real, saving faith, faith in the blood of Christ. The first is this: that faith in the Saviour's blood will always work by love. And then faith in the Saviour's blood will purify the heart. And then faith in the Saviour's blood will overcome the world.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp." The first going forth of the soul to a crucified Saviour is when you feel your unworthiness and your sinfulness and your guilt, when you venture on Him as a lost sinner on mercy's ground, nothing in yourself, your only hope in Him. "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling." "Let us go forth therefore unto Him." Now this is the first going forth of the soul after a crucified Saviour. But here the apostle especially speaks of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, denying self, taking up the cross, following after Him in the narrow way which leads to life. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Now this is a following of the Lord Jesus, following Him in the pilgrimage, following Him in the way He has led, following Him in the narrow way which leads to life.

"Let us go forth therefore unto Him." And this is the point: He is still without the camp. Though risen, exalted, glorified in heaven, He is still without the camp. You will not find Him in the camp of this world, the world which crucified the Lord of life and glory. You will not find Him in the pleasures of the world, the enjoyments of the world, the ambitions of the world. You will have to come out from the world and be separate. I find this, that the beginning of a work of grace will be marked by that gracious separation from the world which lieth in wickedness. You cannot go to heaven with Christ in one hand and the world in the other. He is without the camp, still without the camp, and if your religion is real and you are seeking to journey in the way which leads to heaven, you will

have to go forth unto Him without the camp. He is not found in the general religious camp. It was the religious world rather than the secular world that crucified the Lord of life and glory. You will not find the Lord Jesus in popular, general religion. You certainly will not find Him in that religion which denies that He is the Son of God, which denies His virgin birth, which denies His resurrection. And you will not find the Lord Jesus in a light, flippant, frivolous, flesh-pleasing religion, however loudly it sings concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus. It is without the camp.

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp.” And the apostle makes it very clear that there is a reproach to be borne for Christ’s sake. How many of you here this morning are willing to bear reproach for Christ’s sake? There is an easy kind of religion and it is all right as far as it goes, but there is no reproach in it. If you go the second mile, if you are made willing to be different, if you are enabled to say, No, if you walk tenderly in the fear of God, then there will be reproach. Some of us go back to our early days when we were made willing to bear reproach for Christ’s sake, and when we could sing,

“Living faith will still esteem
The reproaches of the Lamb,
Greater riches than this earth
Can afford the sons of mirth.”

It is that word (and the Lord will never lower the standard; He will never let you get to heaven free from reproach); it will ever be this: “By faith – faith in a Saviour’s blood, faith in a risen Saviour – “by faith ... choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” Now notice that word specially, *the reproach of Christ*. If you will, the worst that Christ gives you. Esteeming that, Christ’s reproach, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. I think of that godly man (was it William Prynne?) in the cruel persecution under Archbishop Laud. He was dreadfully tortured, and in those days it was before a crowd, but with joy he shouted to the crowd, what an honour was his to be privileged to bear such reproach for the sake of His Lord and Master. We are not willing to give much up for the Saviour’s sake, are we?

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” If the way you behave is different, the way you act is different, the way you dress is different, the way you speak is different, the places you go are different, then there will be the reproach. “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” But I would emphasise one point: it must be *unto Him* – not in a self-righteous way, not in a legalistic way, not just with a desire to be different, certainly not with any thought of being superior. “Unto Him.” May that ever be our standard. In everything, the whole of our life, O may I ever

“Live to Him that died,
And nothing here desire to know
Save Jesus crucified.”

For Jesus died and rose again, “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” O that those two words might be deeply engraven upon our hearts and upon our lives: *unto Him*. May this be the standard, “that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.” May this ever be the standard: “Him hath God exalted” – not just in heaven, but in our hearts. May this ever be the standard: “Let us go forth therefore unto Him,” seeking to follow the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, seeking to walk with Him, and in our little measure to walk out this: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” It is *unto Him*.

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” You remember that enquiry, that sacred enquiry in the Song of Solomon: “Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside?” And you remember the answer: “If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock.” Now these are the footsteps of the flock, the way the people of God have ever trod, this well-trodden road to heaven, the footsteps of the flock.

“The way the holy prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,
The King’s highway of holiness
I’ll go, for all His paths are peace.”

“Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock.”

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” Now there is one word I would seek to underline, and may the Holy Spirit underline it in your heart, and it is a vital word: *therefore*. Because of what the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has done, because of the wonder of His love to such vile, wretched, unworthy sinners, because He endured all this to pluck us as brands from the burning, “Let us go forth *therefore* unto Him without the camp.” O the vital point, the sweet constraining of the love of Christ! “Let us ... *therefore*” – because of what the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has suffered for our salvation, in holy gratitude, with tears of love, sweetly constrained – “let us go forth *therefore* unto Him without the camp.” There is an open profession of the Lord’s name here. There is a following Him in His despised ordinances. “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” O how many times have I closed the baptismal sermon before the administration of the ordinance like this:

“Soar we now where Christ has led,
Following our exalted Head;
Made like Him, like Him we rise;
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!”

“Let us go forth *therefore* unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” Why does he add this? Why does he speak about *no continuing city*? “We’ve no abiding city here.” For two reasons. The day of our death draws daily nearer. There is the judgment day; there is a never-ending eternity. O the vital necessity to be prepared, to be made ready! Does it concern you? Do you have to pray to the Lord to make you right? “Here have we no continuing city.” We are here for a moment, and then eternity. But this is the preparation for eternity, the preparation for heaven, to have a personal, vital, saving interest in the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus when He suffered without the gate. And then secondly, for those who know and love and fear the Lord’s name, “here have we no continuing city.” The time is short. The end of all things is at hand. O may there be the desire, what remains of our little lives, to live more to the honour and glory of His name.

“While our days on earth are lengthened,
May we give them, Lord, to Thee.”

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”